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ABSTRACT

As a part of the final report of the Arizona Board of Regents' Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness, the history of statewide planning for postsecondary education in Arizona is presented. In 1974, the Board of Regents adopted a long-range planning document with statements of what it would not do to limit university aspirations and a list of institutional program additions that each university sought to add during the 5-year planning period of 1974-79. Following 1979, the Board revisited some of the planning issues and agreed that a clearly delineated mission statement should be created for the universities. The mission and scope of each of the four institutions were presented with the components of type of institution, degree levels offered, enrollment limits, physical plant, academic degree programs, and continuing education responsibilities. The resulting document is a compilation of the aspirations of the faculties and administration of each university rather than a clear statement of appropriate scope and explicit limits. The importance of a statewide mission document defining the needs to which the system will respond is stressed, noting that such a document should recognize the availability of educational programs in other regional states. It must deal with the issue of what programs are offered in Arizona, which ones need more than one offering by the system, and which institution will offer the program. Such a mission statement should be able to promote public understanding of higher education, promote credibility, insure economy, improve quality, enhance diversity of campuses and programs, and promote access to higher education. (SM)

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THE MISSIONS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING OF ARIZONA'S UNIVERSITIES

ROBERT MACVICAR

The earliest beginnings of higher education in North America during the colonial period were institutions that had a specific mission. Harvard University was created to provide for the education of an indigenous clergy to replace those imported from England, and Princeton had the same purpose for Presbyterian divines. The advent of public universities such as the University of Georgia (1785) and Mr. Jefferson's University of Virginia (1819) created a second category of institution with the mission of preparing young men for professions such as law and public service. During the early period of the Republic, most eastern states established one or more public universities, each with a reasonably well-defined mission and a strong commitment to the traditions of Oxford and Cambridge.

By the mid-nineteenth century there was growing recognition that a rapidly industrialized nation needed different institutions of higher learning. In 1862 the United States Congress created the Land-Grant Colleges. These institutions had a relatively clear mission statement: "at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as related to agriculture and the mechanical arts -- in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

The growing demand for teachers in the schools of a young nation led to the creation of the Normal Schools and Teachers' Institutes in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

More specialized public institutions began to emerge such as Georgia Institute of Technology, the public black colleges under the "separate but equal" doctrine, universities created and funded by cities rather than states, schools of mines in the West (Montana, Colorado, South Dakota, New Mexico), military institutes (Virginia, South Carolina), free-standing institutions of the health professions (California and many other states). The remarkable complexity of higher education in the United States was apparent by the end of the nineteenth century. In all but a few states in the sparsely populated western United States, more than one public institution had been established and the issues of mission clarity and duplication of programs began to emerge.

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During the continual growth of the nation, many of these institutions expanded their original missions to become more comprehensive. Local normal schools became regional state colleges and then universities (in name, if not in function). Competition for resources led legislatures in many states to seek means to achieve better coordination of their respective complex of institutions of higher education. Statewide boards of governance or coordination were created, disbanded, recreated, a process that continues to the present. Almost always, a primary motivation was to achieve more precise statements of institutional mission and avoid unwarranted duplication of programs. Countering these efforts were institutional aspirations to broaden the scope of their programs and extend the level to graduate status. In these efforts they were supported by local interests who saw economic benefit from expanded offerings and by alumni who correctly perceived that the value of their degree was to some extent related to the status of the university that granted it.

Thus the issue has been joined in state after state between the centrifugal forces of institutional aspirations and community "boosterism" and the generally weaker centripetal forces of legislative admonition, gubernatorial expressions of concern about the waste of duplicated programs, and the often-limited power or will (or both) of the coordinating agency.

Yet institutions of higher education must have a clear sense of their mission if their planning for the future is to be realistic. Moreover, resources are always finite and no university can expect to do everything. In states of modest size and resources, these constraints become more limiting; the urgency of clear and explicit directions on what is within the role, scope, and function, and perhaps of greater importance what is not, are greater. Arizona, for the forseeable future, is likely to remain in the middle third of the rank order of states in population. Likewise, it seems unlikely that the per capita income level will exceed the national average; it is currently.

Let us examine in more detail the history of statewide planning for postsecondary education in Arizona. During much of the past century, Arizona grew slowly with an economy based largely on natural resources -- agriculture and mining. In the 1950's, however, numerous "high-technology" industries developed or moved to the two main metropolitan areas. This growth imposed on each of the three institutions the expressed need for access to undergraduate, professional, and graduate educational opportunities. During the phase of slow growth, the character of the three universities appears to have been guided by an implicit understanding of the mission of each one. The University of Arizona was the Land-Grant university with a historic commitment to the Liberal Arts and Sciences, Mining, Agriculture and Engineering. The colleges in Tempe and Flagstaff were primarily teacher education institutions at the baccalaureate and master's levels. As growth accelerated following WWII, each became more comprehensive. The University of Arizona expanded its graduate-level instruction and its research function. Arizona State College at Tempe began to assume the character of a comprehensive research

university, adding doctoral-level studies in numerous disciplines in the 1960's and early 1970's. It became a university in name as well as in function in 1958. The institution in Flagstaff expanded its scope to include programs in business, engineering and forestry, and assumed the university title in 1966.

In the early 1960's, Arizona began to develop a system of community colleges. The Maricopa Community College District is one of the largest of its type in the nation. This system now shares with the three universities a significant share of the lower- division instruction. The districts are under the control of locally elected boards and supported in part by local tax funds. Navajo Community College is a quasi-private college serving primarily the Navajo Reservation.

During the period before 1946, such coordination as occurred seems to have been achieved by legislative admonition and the strong influence of the University of Arizona and its partisans. In 1946 the Board of Regents became the governing body of all baccalaureate-level higher education. The opportunity for coordination and planning for essentially all postsecondary public higher education became a possibility. This was not the tradition, however, and for many years the Board in reality consisted of sub-boards, each of which related to one of the three institutions. This pattern was supported by the practice of submitting three separate budgets, one for each of the institutions, a practice that continues to the present. A long-range planning document adopted in 1974 is characterized by statements of what the Board would not do to limit university aspirations and a long list of institutional program additions at the departmental level that each university sought to add during the five-year planning period, 1974-79.

Following 1974-79, the Board revisited some of the planning issues and agreed that "the increasing size and complexity of the institutions of the Arizona University System coupled with growing societal demand upon universities make it imperative that the mission and scope of each university be clearly delineated and understood." A subcommittee of the Board developed, with the assistance of "key university administrators and the Board's staff," the mission and scope statements for the three universities and a proposed Westside campus in Maricopa County. These statements were to be "the fundamental planning document of the Arizona University System and will provide guidance for the development of budgets, programs and other activities of the universities." The mission and scope of each of the four institutions were presented as a "profile" with the following components:

- Type of Institution
- Degree Levels Offered
- Enrollment Limits
- Physical Plant
- Continuing Education Responsibilities
- Academic Degree Programs

A detailed examination of the four profiles reveals that in a number of relatively noncontroversial aspects there is a substantial degree of specificity, i.e.,

degree levels offered, single or multi-campus university, and continuing educational responsibilities. In other aspects such as "type of institution," however, the following guidance is provided:

o University of Arizona

Continue as a major, comprehensive research university, competitive with the best public universities in the nation.

o Arizona State University

Continue development as a major research university, with special emphasis on programs needed in the state's major urban area. Become competitive with the best public universities in the nation.

o Northern Arizona University

Maintain excellence as a teaching institution while developing special research and public service roles relating to northern Arizona and the Indian tribes. Be competitive with the best institutions of its type in the nation.

In the area of enrollment limits, the following statement is common to all three universities:

> "The Board will continue to consider the question of campus enrollments, keeping in mind the various factors that bear on this question: the size of the institution's physical plant, the resources available and the philosophy of access to higher education to the citizens of the State of Arizona. The university's ultimate size shall be compatible with its goals for academic excellence. Care will be taken to insure that any enrollment limits will not disproportionately impact minority students nor hinder affirmative action plans."

In the profile dealing with academic programs, the emphasis is entirely on positive development and contains no limits or constraints except those that might be inferred by omission.

Overall, the document represents a compilation of the aspirations of the faculties and administration of each university rather than a clear statement both of appropriate scope and explicit limits. Only minor modifications occurred in the mission aspects of a document issued in 1981 and a third dated 1982-83. The five-year planning projection was modified as additional programs were approved for planning and proposed programs were implemented or withdrawn.

Subsequent efforts to develop more precise mission and scope statements by joint efforts of Regents' staff and university Presidents and their staff have been influenced by the decision to develop strategic plans for all the institutions. Institutional competitiveness and concern for the potential for exclusion from disciplines, program areas, or degree level have resulted in documents that repeat the same "aspirational" and expansionistic language found in the earlier Profiles. Indeed, to a substantial degree, the most recent documents echo the statements of the 1980 profiles: "major, comprehensive, be or become competitive with the best."

Such statements might be regarded as relatively harmless if they did not result

in distortion in the allocation of scarce resources:

- first, by the Regents in their role as representatives of the people of the state who in the final analysis created, developed and now sustain the three universities.

- secondly, by university administrators who allocate resources in an attempt to achieve an inappropriate or unrealistic objective but neglect the existing needs of undergraduate students, underserved segments of the population and essential support services.

A too broadly defined scope inevitably dilutes resources and prevents a focus on the most important roles that the institution has to meet for the needs of the state. Offering programs, particularly if they are duplicated, at the graduate and especially the doctoral level may result in weakening already existing program by dividing the prospective students.

A fundamental issue that must be faced by any state that seeks to develop a coordinated system of higher education is the development of a statewide mission document which defines the needs to which the system will respond. In states with a substantial component served by independent colleges and institutions, their contribution to meeting the collective needs must be recognized. However, the coordinating board must recognize its limitation in controlling the independent sector and limit its activities to an advisory role. It may, however, provide direction to the public-sector institutions and avoid actions that would have a deleterious impact on those in the private sector. This issue is of less importance in Arizona, but in developing the Glendale campus of ASU the Board of Regents should be sensitive to actions which might negatively affect Grand Canyon University. The ASU-West campus should develop cooperative relations with Grand Canyon and the American Graduate School of International Management, particularly in areas of library services. Indeed it has already begun to do so.

The statewide mission document should also recognize the availability of educational programs in other regional states, particularly those with which Arizona is affiliated in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. The Commission created by this intergovernmental agreement has for many years served to facilitate transfer of students across state boundaries and to provide access to programs not available in one or more states of the region. Arizona participates in this program at the professional level by providing opportunities in dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, osteopathy and occupational therapy programs. WICHE has recently increased its efforts to effect exchange in graduate programs of limited demand. Currently Arizona universities do not participate in this exchange.

Ultimately, however, the statewide mission statement must deal with the issue of what programs will be offered in Arizona, which ones will require more than a single offering by the system, and which of the institutions will be designated to offer the program or programs. In summary, the following questions will be addressed and answered:

- What programs will be offered?
- By whom will programs be offered?
- Where will programs be offered?
- When will programs be offered?

In developing the individual mission of each university, the Board must achieve a balance between the present needs of the state to avoid unnecessary duplication and the potential demand in the state, the population of which will continue to grow somewhat more rapidly than the national average for the next several decades. The Board has maintained the policy of granting planning authority for new programs; as of June 30, 1988, 36 such authorizations were in force. In the absence of a strategic plan for the system, these authorizations have largely been in response to institutional initiatives. Without the constraints of well-defined mission statements for each of the universities, these requests for planning authority have largely represented departmental or faculty group initiatives. In numerous instances, the planning requests do not appear to re-enforce areas of emphasis and duplicate programs offered elsewhere in the system at the master's or doctoral levels.

In the past several years the Regents have tried to develop plans based on a longer time horizon. With a staff addition in July, 1987, having primary responsibility for strategic planning, efforts have begun to develop more precise mission statements for each of the universities, including the branch campus of ASU in Glendale. The institutional response, in the absence of guidelines from the Regents, has tended to be quantitative (expansion in scope and level) rather than qualitative (enhancement of existing programs, particularly those designated in the 1981-83 documents as appropriate for "national recognition").

Experience in other states leads to the conclusion that the development of restrictive mission statements by institutional leadership is unlikely to occur. In several states which have recently developed long-range plans, the missions of elements of the system have been defined by coordinating boards or, in one instance, by an act of the Legislature (Colorado). California recently completed a review and revision of its "master plan," using an external citizen task force. This document, as an example, reaffirmed the previous master plan in limiting doctoral granting authority to the University of California system.

Recent efforts by the Arizona Board of Regents' staff and the universities to produce more definitive mission statements have, thus far, been less than productive. With the exception of the Glendale campus of ASU, the proposed statements are inclusive rather than exclusive and continue to focus on institutional aspirations rather than on thoughtful reaction to the present and projected needs of Arizona.

In reaction to this situation, the Strategic Planning Council (composed of the Regents' planning and academic staff, the Academic Vice-Presidents of the three universities, and other university representatives) has turned to an effort to achieve agreement on the mission of the system. They have had several meetings from which an Arizona University System Mission document is

emerging. While there has been, and doubtless will continue to be, disagreement, particularly with respect to elements of the mission which are exclusive, the process has led to a better understanding of the aspirations of the individual universities. The limits of the system to support unnecessary duplication of academic programs has become better understood. The long-standing commitment to providing access to high-cost postbaccalaureate professional degree programs (e.g., veterinary medicine, optometry, osteopathic medicine, occupational therapy) by the WICHE program has been reaffirmed. Recognition has been given to the needs of the nonmetropolitan areas of the state that will continue to contain between 20 to 25 percent of the total population and a slightly higher fraction of the traditional college age population.

At some appropriate time, closure on the AUS mission statement should be reached even if there is no consensus, and the alternatives presented to the Council of Presidents for refinement and further development. This review might result in modification of the proposal or its return to the Strategic Planning Council with instructions on how to proceed. At some time, as the Council of Presidents approves a revised AUS mission statement, or if it also is unable to attain consensus and develops alternative components, the document should be referred to the Regents.

Because the AUS mission document is such an essential element in the planning process, the Board should discuss the proposals as a committee of the whole. It would also be appropriate to allow ample time between initial consideration and subsequent hearings when testimony would be received from interested clientele: students, representatives of business, industry and government, and the general citizenry. Ultimately what is sought is a document capable of providing guidance to the representative campuses in developing their own mission statement. The time span envisaged for the statement should be of reasonable duration based on the realization that highly accurate long-range assumptions on the environment in which the system and its individual components will operate cannot be made. Hence it should be expected that the strategic-planning process will be revisited periodically at the system level. At the time of review and revision, there will be need to examine the system mission statement and planning guidelines and make such revisions as changing circumstances make necessary.

In its efforts to create mission and scope statements for the then three universities and the proposed westside Phoenix campus of ASU, the Regents asserted:

"The clear definition of each institution's mission and scope is the very cornerstone of any rational planning process in a university system. Well-defined institutional mission and scope statements are vital for the provision of an effective and efficient system of higher education in the State ofArizona as they:

A. Promote access to higher education by insuring that opportunities for all qualified citizens are available;

B. Enhance the diversity of campuses and programs by identifying their

unique characteristics and avoiding tendencies for universities to become more-and-more like each other;

C. Improve quality by establishing missions that discourage the lowering of academic standards in the period of possible competition for students;

D. Insure economy by reducing the potential for unnecessary program duplication;

E. Promote credibility by providing each public segment and institution with a realistic and explicit set of expectations about its future program emphases; and

F. Promote public understanding of higher education by illustrating for students, the general public, and state officials the pattern and logic of the missions and programs of the institutions so that they may have a better basis for making choices."

In the five years since these policy statements were made, significant environmental changes have occurred and the institutions have continued their development. The ASU Westside campus has been brought "on-line" at its permanent site and funds for Phase I of the physical plant development were approved. It would be timely when the AUS mission and scope statement is submitted to the Board for review and ultimate action to also review these broad policy assertions, make modifications as necessary, and adopt the revised statements as basic guidelines to the individual elements of the system as they proceed to develop their own mission and scope statements.

One environmental factor that has significantly changed in the past decade, largely as a result of the concern for the state tax burden, has been the gradual erosion of the tax base when compared with the demand for public services by a state of rapid population growth. Competition from the state human services agencies has increased and it is anticipated this will continue. As a result of this situation, the focus of each university may need to be more circumscribed than would have been the case in an earlier period.

There is probably no more important task for the Board of Regents than to provide guidance to the individual elements of the system as they continue to provide instruction, research, and service to a broad international constituency. By the development of a well-articulated system mission and scope statement and subsequent statements for the four principal elements of the system, the limited resources likely to be available for the foreseeable future can be focused to maintain both the quality of the programs provided and their accessibility to a growing population and to elements not now participating fully.